

Before you begin reading . . .

Complete the *Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire*, which you will find on pp. 11–12. As you read the chapter, consider your results on the questionnaire.

Being a Leader

1

This book is about *what it takes to be a leader*. Everyone, at some time in life, is asked to be a leader, whether to lead a classroom discussion, coach a children's soccer team, or direct a fund-raising campaign. Many situations require leadership. A leader may have a high profile (e.g., an elected public official) or a low profile (e.g., a volunteer leader in Big Brothers Big Sisters), but in every situation there are leadership demands placed on the individual who is the leader. Being a leader is challenging, exciting, and rewarding, and carries with it many responsibilities. This chapter discusses different ways of looking at leadership and their impacts on what it means to be a leader.

DEFINING LEADERSHIP ◀

At the outset, it is important to address a basic question: *What is leadership?* Scholars who study leadership have struggled with this question for many decades and have written a great deal about the nature of leadership (Antonakis, Cianciolo, & Sternberg, 2004; Bass, 1990; Conger & Riggio, 2007). (See Box 1.1.) In leadership literature, more than 100 different definitions of leadership have been identified (Rost, 1991). Despite these many definitions, a number of concepts are recognized by most people as accurately reflecting what it is to be a leader.



Video Link 1.1

Watch people talk about their definitions of leadership.

Box 1.1 The Evolution of Leadership

Leadership has long intrigued humankind and has been the topic of extensive literature for centuries. The earliest writings include philosophies of leadership such as Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1531), and biographies of great leaders. With the development of the social sciences during the 20th century, inquiry into leadership became prolific. Studies on leadership have emerged from every discipline "that has had some interest in the subject of leadership: anthropology, business administration, educational administration, history, military science, nursing administration, organizational behavior, philosophy, political science, public administration, psychology, sociology, and theology" (Rost, 1991, p. 45).

As a result, there are many approaches to leadership. Not unlike fashion, approaches to leadership have evolved, changed focus and direction, and built upon one another during the past century. To understand this evolution a brief historical view can be helpful:

Trait Approach

The early **trait approach** theories were called "**Great Man**" **theories** because they focused on identifying the innate qualities and characteristics possessed by great social, political, and military leaders such as Catherine the Great, Mohandas Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Moses, and Joan of Arc. Studies of leadership traits were especially strong from 1900 to the early 1940s and enjoyed a renewed emphasis beginning in the 1970s as researchers began to examine visionary and charismatic leadership. In the 1980s, researchers linked leadership to the "*Big Five*" *personality factors* while interest in *emotional intelligence* as a trait gained favor in the 1990s.

Behavior Approach

In the late 1930s, leadership research began to focus on behavior—what leaders do and how they act. Groundbreaking studies by researchers at The Ohio State University and the University of Michigan in the 1940s and 1950s analyzed how leaders acted in small group situations. **Behavior approach** theories hit their heyday in the early 1960s with Blake and Moulton's (1964) work exploring how managers use **task behaviors** and **relationship behaviors** in the organizational setting.

Situational Approach

The premise of this approach is that different situations demand different kinds of leadership. Serious examination of **situational approach** theories began in the late 1960s by Hersey and Blanchard and Reddin. Situational approaches continued to be refined and revised from the 1970s through the 1990s (Vecchio, 1987). One of these, **path-goal**

theory, examines how leaders use employee motivation to enhance performance and satisfaction. Another approach, **contingency theory**, focuses on the match between the leader's style and specific situational variables.

Relational Approach

In the 1990s, researchers began examining the nature of relations between leaders and followers. This research ultimately evolved into the *Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory*. LMX Theory predicts that high-quality relations generate more positive leader outcomes than lower-quality relations. Research in the **relational approach** of leadership continues to generate moderate interest today.

"New Leadership" Approach

When these approaches began appearing in the mid-1980s—three decades ago—they were, and continue to be, called "new leadership" approaches (Bryman, 1992). Beginning in 1985 with the work of Bass and his associates, leadership studies generated *visionary* or *charismatic leadership* theories. From these approaches developed **transformational leadership theory**, which describes leadership as a process that changes people and organizations.

Emerging Leadership Approaches

A diverse range of approaches to leadership are emerging during the 21st century. Currently, **authentic leadership** that looks at the authenticity of leaders and their leadership is enjoying strong interest. Similarly, the **spiritual leadership** approach examines how leaders use values, a sense of "calling," and membership to motivate followers. **Servant leadership** emphasizes the "caring principle" with leaders as "servants" who focus on their followers' needs in order to help these followers become more autonomous, knowledgeable, and like servants themselves. *Gender-based studies* have gained much momentum as women continue to become more dominant in the workforce, especially on a global level. The shrinking of the world through technology has also been illuminated through the study of *cultural and global approaches* to leadership.

This historical timeline is not intended to represent these approaches as being separate and distinct eras, only to disappear from the picture when a new theory appears. Instead, many of these theories occur concurrently, building upon one another (see Figure 1.1). Even when a certain approach's period of popularity has waned, the theory continues to influence further study and the development of new leadership approaches.

Encyclopedia Link 1.1

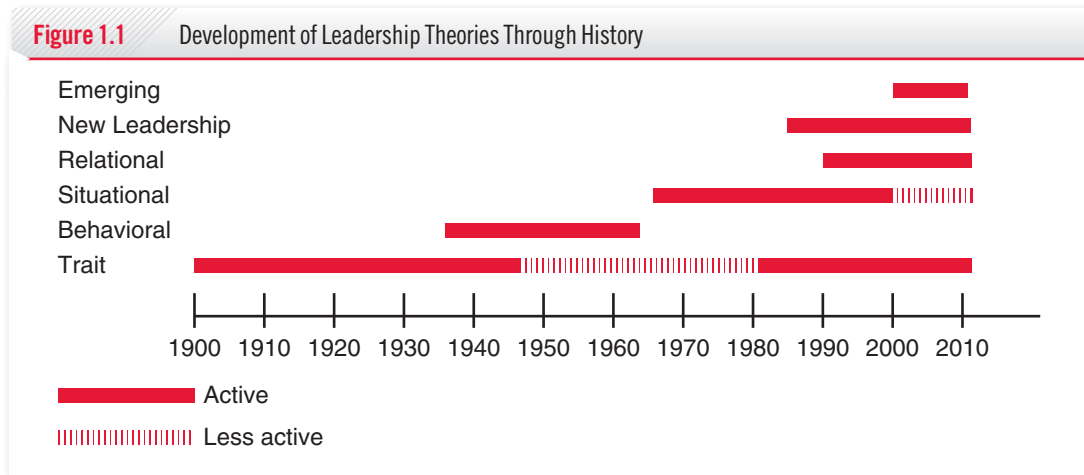


Read more on contemporary leadership theories.

Video Link 1.2




Watch more about changes in leadership.



Source: Adapted from Antonakis, J., Cianciolo, A. T., & Sternberg, R. J. (Eds.). (2004). *The nature of leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, p. 7.

“LEADERSHIP IS A TRAIT”

First, leadership is thought of as a *trait*. A **trait** is a distinguishing quality of an individual, which is often inherited. Defining leadership as a trait means that each individual brings to the table certain qualities that influence the way he or she leads. Some leaders are confident, some are decisive, and still others are outgoing and sociable. Saying that leadership is a trait places a great deal of emphasis on the leader and on the leader’s special gifts. It follows the often-expressed belief “leaders are born, not made.” Some argue that focusing on traits makes leadership an elitist enterprise because it implies that only a few people with special talents will lead. Although there may be some truth to this argument, it can also be argued that all of us are born with a wide array of unique traits and that many of these traits can have a positive impact on our leadership. It also may be possible to modify or change some traits.

 **Encyclopedia Link 1.2**
 Read more about traits and leadership.

Through the years, researchers have identified a multitude of traits that are associated with leadership. In Chapter 2 we will discuss many of these. Although there are many important leadership traits, what is most important for leaders is having the required traits that a particular situation demands. For example, a chaotic emergency room at a hospital requires a leader who is insightful and decisive and can bring calm to the situation. Conversely, a high school classroom in which students are bored demands a teacher who is inspiring and creative.

Effective leadership results when the leader engages the right traits in the right place at the right time.

“LEADERSHIP IS AN ABILITY”

In addition to being thought of as a trait, leadership is conceptualized as an ability. A person who has leadership **ability** is *able* to be a leader—that is, has the capacity to lead. While the term *ability* frequently refers to a natural capacity, ability can be acquired. For example, some people are naturally good at public speaking, while others rehearse to become comfortable speaking in public. Similarly, some people have the natural physical ability to excel in a sport, while others develop their athletic capacity through exercise and practice. In leadership, some people have the natural ability to lead, while others develop their leadership abilities through hard work and practice.

An example of leadership as ability is the legendary University of California at Los Angeles basketball coach John Wooden, whose teams won seven consecutive National Collegiate Athletic Association titles. Described first as a teacher and then as a coach, Wooden implemented four laws of learning into his coaching: explanation, demonstration, imitation, and repetition. His goal was to teach players how to do the right thing instinctively under great pressure. Less visible or well known, but also an example of leadership as ability, is the unheralded but highly effective restaurant manager who, through years of experience and learning, is able to create a successful, award-winning restaurant. In both of these examples, it is the individuals' abilities that create outstanding leadership.

“LEADERSHIP IS A SKILL”

Third, leadership is a *skill*. Conceptualized as a **skill**, leadership is a *competency* developed to accomplish a task effectively. Skilled leaders are competent people who know the means and methods for carrying out their responsibilities. For example, a skilled leader in a fund-raising campaign knows every step and procedure in the fund-raising process and is able to use this knowledge to run an effective campaign. In short, skilled leaders are competent—they know what they need to do, and they know how to do it.

Describing leadership as a skill makes leadership available to everyone because skills are competencies that people can learn or develop. Even without natural leadership ability, people can improve their leadership with practice, instruction, and feedback from others. Viewed as a skill, leadership can be studied and learned. If you are capable of learning from experience, you can acquire leadership.

“LEADERSHIP IS A BEHAVIOR”

Leadership is also a *behavior*. It is *what leaders do* when they are in a leadership role. The behavioral dimension is concerned with how leaders act toward others in various situations. Unlike traits, abilities, and skills, leadership behaviors are observable. When someone leads, we see that person's leadership behavior.

Research on leadership has shown that leaders engage primarily in two kinds of general behaviors: **task behaviors** and **process behaviors**. Task behaviors are used by leaders to get the job done (e.g., a leader prepares an agenda for a meeting). Process behaviors are used by leaders to help people feel comfortable with other group members and at ease in the situations in which they find themselves (e.g., a leader helps individuals in a group to feel included). Since leadership requires both task and process behaviors, the challenge for leaders is to know the best way to combine them in their efforts to reach a goal.



Video Link 1.3

See a definition of leadership.

“LEADERSHIP IS A RELATIONSHIP”

Another, and somewhat unusual, way to think about leadership is as a *relationship*. From this perspective, leadership is centered on the communication between leaders and followers rather than on the unique qualities of the leader. Thought of as a relationship, leadership becomes a process of collaboration that occurs between leaders and followers (Rost, 1991). A leader affects and is affected by followers, and both leader and followers are affected in turn by the situation that surrounds them. This approach emphasizes that leadership is not a linear one-way event, but rather an interactive event. In traditional leadership, authority is often top down; in the interactive type of



Video Link 1.4

Watch a leader speak about collaboration.

leadership, authority and influence are shared. When leadership is defined in this manner, it becomes available to everyone. It is not restricted to the formally designated leader in a group.

Thinking of leadership as a relationship suggests that leaders must include followers and their interests in the process of leadership. A leader needs to be fully aware of the followers and the followers' interests, ideas, positions, attitudes, and motivations. In addition, this approach has an ethical overtone because it stresses the need for leaders to work with followers to achieve their mutual purposes. Stressing mutuality lessens the possibility that leaders might act toward followers in ways that are forced or unethical. It also increases the possibility that leaders and followers will work together toward a common good (Rost, 1991).

"LEADERSHIP IS AN INFLUENCE PROCESS"

A final way of thinking about leadership is as an influence process. This is the perspective that will be emphasized in this book.

***Leadership** is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.*

Video Link 1.5

Watch a leader speak about influence.



Defining leadership as an influence process means that it is not a trait or an ability that resides in the leader, but rather an interactive event that occurs between the leader and the followers. Influence is central to the process of leadership because leaders affect followers. Leaders direct their energies toward influencing individuals to achieve something together. Stressing common goals gives leadership an ethical dimension because it lessens the possibility that leaders might act toward followers in ways that use coercion or are unethical.

► GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Journal Link 1.1

Read about global leadership competencies.



We probably all wonder at the differences in leadership around the world. Why do some countries gravitate toward the distributed leadership of a democracy, while others seem content with the hierarchical leadership of a monarchy or dictatorship? The definition and concepts of leadership outlined in this chapter are from an American perspective. If you were to travel to nations across the world, you would no doubt encounter different views of leadership specific to those ethnic and political cultures.

In 2004, Robert House led a group of 160 researchers in an ambitious study to increase our understanding of the impact culture has on leadership effectiveness. The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) studies drew on the input of 17,000 people in 62 countries in determining how leadership varies across the world. Among the many findings generated by the GLOBE studies was the identification of positive and negative leadership characteristics that are universally accepted worldwide (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Universal Leadership Attributes		
Positive Leader Attributes		
Trustworthy	Just	Honest
Foresighted	Plans ahead	Encouraging
Positive	Dynamic	Motivator
Builds confidence	Motivational	Dependable
Intelligent	Decisive	Effective bargainer
Win-win problem solver	Communicative	Informed
Administratively skilled	Coordinator	Team builder
Excellence oriented		
Negative Leader Attributes		
Loner	Asocial	Noncooperative
Irritable	Nonexplicit	Egocentric
Ruthless	Dictatorial	

Source: Adapted from House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.). (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 677–678. Reprinted with permission.

To summarize, the meaning of leadership is complex and includes many dimensions. For some people, leadership is a *trait* or an *ability*, for others it is a *skill* or a *behavior*; and for still others it is a *relationship* or *process*. In reality, leadership probably includes components of all of these dimensions. Each dimension explains a facet of leadership.

In considering these various definitions of leadership and based on your Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire results, which dimension seems closest to how you think of leadership? How would you define leadership? Answers to these questions are important because *how you think* about leadership will strongly influence *how you practice* leadership.



Journal Link 1.2
Read more about dimensions and leadership.

► PRACTICING LEADERSHIP

There is a strong demand for effective leadership in society today. This demand exists at the local and community levels, as well as at the national level, in this country and abroad. People feel the need for leadership in all aspects of their lives. They want leaders in their personal lives, at school, in the work setting, and even in their spiritual lives. Everywhere you turn, people are expressing a need for strong leadership.

When people ask for leadership in a particular situation, it is not always clear exactly what they want. For the most part, however, they want effective leadership. Effective leadership is intended influence that creates change for the greater good. Leadership uses positive means to achieve positive outcomes. Furthermore, people want leaders who listen to and understand their needs and who can relate to their circumstances. The challenge for each of us is to be prepared to lead when we are asked to be the leader.

CASE STUDY

The following case study describes the leadership of a very successful high school swimming coach. The questions at the end of the case will help you analyze the case using ideas from the different conceptual perspectives provided in the chapter.

King of the Hill

Denny Hill's career as a high school swimming coach didn't start out well. The seniors on his team quit in the first season because he required them to come to all the workouts. The team only won three meets the whole season. That was 40 years ago. Since that time, the high school chemistry teacher's success as a swimming coach has been extraordinary; his winnings include more than 900 boys' and girls' dual meets and a phenomenal 31 state titles.

Denny is noted for creating a team effort out of what is usually considered an individual sport. He begins every season with a team sleepover, followed by "Hell Week," a two-week grueling regimen in which team members swim at least 5 miles a workout and 10 miles a day. Denny sees "Hell Week" as pivotal: "When the kids are in the same boat—kind of like boot camp—there is a certain bonding of them all doing it together" (McCabe, 2003, p. 8D).

Denny sees his team as an aquatic family. "Kids want boundaries at this age," he says, "so I make the rules very clear to them. They also want to feel safe."

And while Denny makes his swimmers train, train, train, he doesn't exclude anyone. Even if a swimmer doesn't show state title-winning potential, Denny still treats him or her as a full-fledged member of the team.

Denny passes the mantle of leadership onto his team members, as well. Seniors are expected to be the mature leaders who inform the freshmen of the team goals and expectations. Juniors are to be role models, while sophomores serve as quiet leaders who are still learning but have a foundation in the team culture. Even the freshmen members have a job: They are required to pay attention to the coaches and other team members as they learn the team's culture and what's expected.

Denny, described as adept at “reading kids,” is known for his ability to relate to his swimmers. A good listener, he holds a 20-minute team meeting each Monday where every member has the opportunity to present a rose or a complaint to anyone on the team including the coaches. He is tough on swimmers and makes them work, but when they need support he is always there to put an arm around them. His assistant and wife Liz says, “He knows if you yell all the time, they tune you out, and he knows if you're nice all the time, you're not going to get everything out of them” (McCabe, 2003, p. 8D).

One of his former swimmers says Denny's ability to use humor made him a great coach: “He instantly got the team on his side. He'd make a comment or joke that would take the edge off those long distance workouts . . . But he knew his stuff. We worked very, very hard for him” (McCabe, 2003, p. 8D).

Denny's philosophy is similar to that of the famous University of Michigan football coach, Bo Schembechler. “The winning thing isn't everything. Preparing to win is the key. By preparing to win, everything takes care of itself. When you do win, you've done it the right way,” Denny says (“Hill Earns 500th Win as Pioneer Boys Swim Coach,” 2009).

Questions

1. What leadership *traits* account for Denny Hill's success?
2. How would you describe Denny Hill's leadership *abilities*?
3. Leadership includes administrative skills, interpersonal skills, and conceptual skills. How does Denny Hill stack up on these *skills*?
4. How does Denny Hill integrate task and relationship *behaviors* in his leadership?
5. From a relational perspective, how would you describe Denny Hill's leadership?
6. In what way does Denny Hill's coaching exemplify leadership as an influence process?

Summary

All of us at some time in our lives will be asked to show leadership. When you are asked to be the leader, it will be both demanding and rewarding. How you approach leadership is strongly influenced by your definitions of and beliefs about leadership. Through the years, writers have defined leadership in a multitude of ways. It is a complex, multidimensional process that is often conceptualized in a variety of ways by different people. Some of the most common ways of looking at leadership are as a trait, an ability, a skill, a behavior, a relationship, or a process. The way you think about leadership will influence the way you practice leadership.



Video Link 1.6

Watch a definition of leadership.



Go to <http://www.sagepub.com/northouseintro2e/> for additional exercises and study resources. Select Chapter 1, *Being a Leader*, for chapter-specific activities.

Glossary Terms

ability	4	servant leadership	2
authentic leadership	2	situational approach	2
behavior approach	2	skill	4
contingency theory	2	spiritual leadership	2
“Great Man” theories	2	task behaviors	5
leadership	6	trait	3
path-goal theory	2	trait approach	2
process behaviors	5	transformational leadership	
relational approach	2	theory	2
relationship behaviors	2		

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1.1 Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire



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Purpose

1. To identify how you view leadership
2. To explore your perceptions of different aspects of leadership

Directions

1. Consider for a moment your own impressions of the word *leadership*. Based on your experiences with leaders in your lifetime, what is leadership?
2. Using the scale below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about leadership.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. When I think of leadership, I think of a person with special personality traits.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Much like playing the piano or tennis, leadership is a learned ability.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Leadership requires knowledge and know-how.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Leadership is about what people do rather than who they are.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Followers can influence the leadership process as much as leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Leadership is about the process of influencing others.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Some people are born to be leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Some people have the natural ability to be leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The key to successful leadership is having the right skills.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Leadership is best described by what leaders do.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Leaders and followers share in the leadership process.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Leadership is a series of actions directed toward positive ends.	1	2	3	4	5
13. A person needs to have certain traits to be an effective leader.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Everyone has the capacity to be a leader.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Effective leaders are competent in their roles.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The essence of leadership is performing tasks and dealing with people.	1	2	3	4	5

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
17. Leadership is about the common purposes of leaders and followers.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Leadership does not rely on the leader alone but is a process involving the leader, followers, and the situation.	1	2	3	4	5
19. People become great leaders because of their traits.	1	2	3	4	5
20. People can develop the ability to lead.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Effective leaders have competence and knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Leadership is about how leaders work with people to accomplish goals.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Effective leadership is best explained by the leader-follower relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Leaders influence and are influenced by followers.	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring

1. Sum scores on items 1, 7, 13, and 19 (trait emphasis)
2. Sum scores on items 2, 8, 14, and 20 (ability emphasis)
3. Sum scores on items 3, 9, 15, and 21 (skill emphasis)
4. Sum scores on items 4, 10, 16, and 22 (behavior emphasis)
5. Sum scores on items 5, 11, 17, and 23 (relationship emphasis)
6. Sum scores on items 6, 12, 18, and 24 (process emphasis)

Total Scores

1. Trait emphasis: _____
2. Ability emphasis: _____
3. Skill emphasis: _____
4. Behavior emphasis: _____
5. Relationship emphasis: _____
6. Process emphasis: _____

Scoring Interpretation

The scores you received on this questionnaire provide information about how you define and view leadership. The emphasis you give to the various dimensions of leadership has implications for how you approach the leadership process. For example, if your highest score is *trait emphasis*, it suggests that you emphasize the role of the leader and the leader's special gifts in the leadership process. However, if your highest score is *relationship emphasis*, it indicates that you think leadership is centered on the communication between leaders and followers, rather than on the unique qualities of the leader. By comparing your scores, you can gain an understanding of the aspects of leadership that you find most important and least important. The way you think about leadership will influence how you practice leadership.

1.2 Observational Exercise



Visit www.sagepub.com/northouseintro2e for downloadable versions of these questionnaires

Conceptualizing Leadership

Purpose

1. To develop an understanding of the complexity of leadership
2. To become aware of the different ways people define leadership

Directions

1. In this exercise, select five people you know and interview them about leadership.
2. Ask each person to give you his or her definition of leadership, and to describe his or her personal beliefs about effective leadership.
3. Record each person's response on a separate sheet of paper.

Person #1 (name) _____

Person #2 (name) _____

Person #3 (name) _____

Person #4 (name) _____

Person #5 (name) _____

Questions

1. What differences did you observe in how these people define leadership?
2. What seems to be the most common definition of leadership?
3. In what ways did people describe leadership differently from the definitions in Chapter 1, "Being a Leader"?
4. Of the people interviewed, whose definition comes closest to your own? Why?

1.3 Reflection and Action Worksheet



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Conceptualizing Leadership

Reflection

1. Each of us has our own unique way of thinking about leadership. What leaders or people have influenced you in your thinking about leadership? Discuss what leadership means to you and give your definition of leadership.
2. What do the scores you received on the Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire suggest about your beliefs on leadership? Of the six dimensions on the questionnaire (traits, ability, skills, behavior, relationships, and process), which two are the most similar to your own beliefs? Which two are the least like your own beliefs? Discuss.
3. Do you think leadership is something everyone can learn to do, or do you think it is a natural ability reserved for a few? Explain your answer.

Action

1. Based on the interviews you conducted with others about leadership, how could you incorporate others' ideas about leadership into your own leadership?
2. Treating leadership as a relationship has ethical implications. How could adding the *relationship* approach to your leadership make you a better leader? Discuss.
3. Think about your own leadership. Identify one trait, ability, skill, or behavior that you could develop more fully to become a better leader.

